



2016

Balance Keepers #1: The Fires of Calderon

Loretta Farnsworth

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr>

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Farnsworth, Loretta (2016) "Balance Keepers #1: The Fires of Calderon," *Children's Book and Media Review*: Vol. 37 : Iss. 8 , Article 3.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol37/iss8/3>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the All Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Children's Book and Media Review by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

Book Review

Title: Balance Keepers #1: The Fires of Calderon

Author: Lindsay Cummings

Reviewer: Loretta Farnsworth

Publisher: Katherine Tegen Books

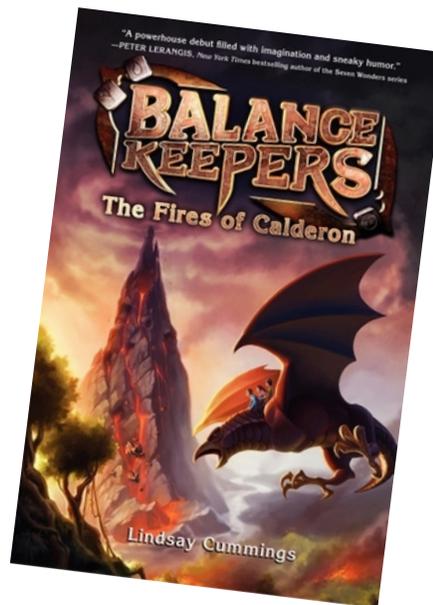
Publication Year: 2014

ISBN: 9780062275189

Number of Pages: 335

Interest Level: Intermediate

Rating: Dependable



Review

Eleven-year-old Albert Flynn spends his summers with his father and grandfather in Wyoming. When he is asked to deliver a letter to a hermit in the middle of the woods, he discovers that his postal worker father is actually a professor in a strange land in the center of the earth. In the Core, children from around the world are taught to keep balance in realms that are connected to Earth. As each child agrees to become a Balance Keeper, they obtain a white tile that gives them a superpower to assist them. However, Albert's tile is black and does not seem to give Albert any powers. As Albert and his teammates—Birdie and Leroy—prepare to battle the elements to restore balance in the Calderon realm, Albert learns that his tile has the power to take on attributes of other tiles. Albert's team places first in the competitions to earn the right to enter the realms in case of emergency. The next morning, the Balance Keepers' First Unit is declared missing, and Albert's father along with them. Albert, Birdie, and Leroy enter Calderon and succeed in both restoring balance to the realm and rescuing Albert's father and the First Unit. The trio returns to their homes with the promise of returning to the Core the following summer.

There are many elements of the story that feel a little overused. Besides the obvious idea of there being a world in the center of the world (*Journey to the Center of the Earth*), other elements that stood out as cliché include a trio of friends going head-to-head with a trio of rival students called "pures" (similar to *Harry Potter*) and groups training for quests while being lodged on campgrounds (similar to *Percy Jackson*). However, considering the intended audience (eight- to twelve-year-olds), readers may not identify elements as cliché because they are still being exposed to such stories. That aside, the characters Albert, Birdie, and Leroy are well developed; readers can identify them by what they say and do, and their variety of personalities are all relatable. The theme of persistence in the face of opposition, particularly as Albert struggled to find the secret to his "useless" tile, was well developed. The setting was fun and whimsical. Overall, adventure-loving boys and girls from eight to twelve would enjoy this book; however, well-read children might become bored due to the cliché parts of the story.

*Contains mild violence.